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as from:

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9 June 1986

Robert M. Gates, Esq.,
Deputy Director,
Washington, D.C. 20505.

Dear Bob:

By now you have no doubt seen the 2 June review of the Ranelagh book in the Washington Times while I have just received your letter of 30 May with your views about the book. The criticisms embodied in your letter I found cogent. Whether I could have used any of them is doubtful in view of your last paragraph caveat. Nevertheless I found them most useful. Probably I should have taken a little more space to admonish the author for his constricted view of Bill Casey,

The problem in book reviewing, unless you have loads and loads of space, is how to cover everything. It becomes a burdensome problem in reviewing a huge book of 624 pages. I had to decide for space reasons to ignore boobos such as: the reference to Neville Chamberlain as Head of State when he was merely Head of Government and it is the monarch who is H of S. Or Meany was AFL secretary-treasurer not general secretary; or that Jay Lovestone was in the OSS which was news to me or misspelling of names like Charles Wilson, Admiral Radford, Correa, Swiato; his ignorance of the onetime Communist monopoly power in French trade unions; his exaggerated feelings about George Bush. And so on. But I didn't think these and others were crucial errors.

Overall I thought it was a responsible book about the CIA by an outsider without access, especially when I think of what some former CIA executives like Thomas Braden have written having had access. So far as I know, Ranelagh has no intelligence background and what's more he's a foreigner, a Brit. Yet he has managed to write a balanced, understanding book about the problems of intelligence in a democracy and for that I applauded him. That he may have been less than generous to Mr. Casey is true but when I think of the sordid hostile attacks which have been made against the Director and the demands for his resignation from Republicans no less, I think Mr. Casey came out alright. As you indicate not only did Mr. Casey not get credit from the author for constructive changes, he doesn't get credit from others who should, you imply, know better.

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As for your penultimate paragraph, I don't know how we're ever going to be able to prove that "Bill has had a pervasive, long-term impact on this place that will leave the country a far

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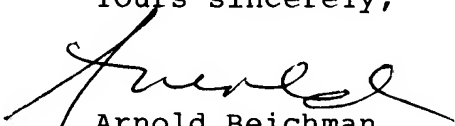
better, more tough-minded and more capable intelligence service than he and Ronald Reagan found." There is no more difficult problem in politics than finding empirical data to prove influence, let alone power. Perhaps when we meet again (in mid-September ?) we can go into detail about this with a view to possible or eventual publication if it were thought worthwhile.

I'm just back from a weekend meeting on the campus of the University of Alberta, Winnipeg, of the Canadian Association of Intelligence and Security Studies, headed by Professor Reg Roy, the University of Victoria military historian. CASIS was inspired directly by the Consortium for the Study of Intelligence.

The Newport, R.I. Naval War College meeting with Lehman, CINPAC Admiral Lyons opens 16 June and I will attend, the invite having finally arrived. The USSR in the Pacific will be the theme. Are you going to have anybody there in attendance ?

I appreciate your taking the trouble of writing me.

Yours sincerely,



Arnold Beichman

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Robert M. Gates, Esq.,
Deputy Director,
Washington, D.C. 20505.



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The Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

Washington D.C. 20505

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30 May 1986

Mr. Arnold Beichman



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Dear Arnold:

Sorry I misdirected my letter to Stanford; I had thought you were in residence there through the end of the academic year. You certainly could not find two more spectacular places to spend your time than British Columbia and Palo Alto.

I was interested to read in your letter that you are doing a major review of John Ranelagh's book. I have read the parts pertaining to the last twenty years rather carefully, but have paid less attention to his discussion of the first half of the Agency's history.

The several pages in which he quotes me in the final chapter are, to my regret, drawn exclusively from an informal talk I gave to the Association of Former Intelligence Officers last year, in which they asked me to address changes or trends in intelligence. The speech was off the record and I did not devote anything like the time to it that I did, for example, to the speech I gave at Harvard last February on the University and CIA. In fact, I did not even have a text, but just some notes. In any event, Ranelagh accurately reports what I said in that talk, and his accuracy in such a relatively unimportant matter would suggest that he has taken equal care in other areas as well.

At the same time, his analysis of some of the things I said betrays a woeful lack of understanding of how our government works. For example, the notion that our effort to address issues affecting other agencies of government is an attempt to win bureaucratic allies reflects ignorance of the fact that an independent, outside view is not welcomed by any bureaucracy. (Indeed, changing that attitude at CIA has been a continuing challenge.) Far from making bureaucratic allies, CIA's work in new areas -- such as on the Third World debt problem -- has, in fact, brought nothing but controversy and conflict with powerful bureaucracies in town.

More broadly, I think his chapter on the period 1980-85 (which I have heard was added in a rush at the insistence of his publisher in order to improve sales) is not very good and does serious injustice to Bill Casey -- as does the title of the book. As far as I'm concerned, the book significantly understates the long term impact that Bill has had on the Agency. Ranelagh is just wrong, for example, when on page 689 he



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says that, "Under Casey, no great technical intelligence rearrangements or breakthroughs were made." Ranelagh cannot be expected to know those few secrets that have not yet leaked, but I believe history will show that S&T developments, particularly in the collection world, of historic importance originated during Bill's tenure. Equally important, Bill has been able to bring earlier conceptions and plans to fruition.

Another area where Ranelagh is incredibly off the mark is his reference to Bill as a "narrow" person. There are a number of people in this town that believe that Bill is the best strategic thinker in the Administration -- one who can think across the entire globe and project several moves ahead. Having watched at close hand for five and one-half years, I am certainly one who holds that view. His strategic grasp and insight have had an important impact on the range and relevance of our estimates.

I also believe Ranelagh vastly overstates the power of the NSC Staff, especially the notion of its growth at CIA's expense. This is a major thesis of his and, having spent considerable time in both institutions, I think he is mistaken.

Finally, I think that Bill has done a lot more to shake this place up and rejuvenate it internally, including senior level personnel changes, than he gets credit for by Ranelagh (and others for that matter).

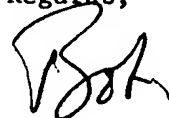
All in all, I think Ranelagh has not devoted the care and attention to the final chapter of his book that appears to characterize his work on the earlier years.

I have ended up writing more to you than I intended only because I feel strongly that Ranelagh doesn't give Bill his due for strengthening the Agency and the Intelligence Community, for restoring morale and capability, and for undertaking new initiatives, approaches and even cultural changes across the board. Bureaucracies change slowly, as many Presidents have discovered; I think it will be apparent in not too many years that Bill has had a pervasive, long-term impact on this place that will leave the country a far better, more tough-minded and more capable intelligence service than he and Ronald Reagan found.

Arnold, these are only my personal views and I would ask you not to cite or refer to them, even indirectly, in your review. I just think Bill doesn't get the credit he deserves for major, long-term improvements here and I wanted to give you some grist for your own reflections. I look forward to chatting with you further about this and other things when next we meet -- and I hope that will be sometime soon.

All the best.

Regards,



Robert M. Gates

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9 May 1986

Robert M. Gates, Esq.,
Deputy Director,
Washington, D.C. 20505.

Dear Bob:

This belated acknowledgement of your kind letter of 24 April is due to delays in mail forwarding. The fact is that I am in residence as above until mid-October when I return to Hoover. I believe you phoned me here (604-496-5405) last Spring.

I am at the moment writing a long review for the Washington Times of the huge and impressive volume, The Agency by John Ranelagh. (I don't have the actual book; I'm working from bound galleys which is a pest.) Your office as well as many others gave the author a good deal of time I would judge from examining his footnotes. My impression is that he's done an excellent job of research, organizing and interviewing. The book is not free from errors but nothing serious as far as I could see. It's surprising that the well-informed author is a Brit. I'm sure you've seen the book by now.

You can be sure that on my next trip to Washington, I hope to be number one on your dance card. I am still working along on the Soviet Pacific fleet. There's supposed to be a meeting of some kind next month at one of the naval colleges about the Pacific to which I am supposed to be invited but so far-- silence. If I get down to that meeting, I'll let you know.

And congratulations on the new post, a fact which I celebrated publicly (and cautiously) in the Washington Times several weeks ago.

Sincerely,

Arnold Beichman,
Research Associate



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The Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

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24 April 1986

Mr. Arnold Beichman
Hoover Institution
Stanford University
Stanford, California 94305

Dear Arnold:

Bill Casey mentioned to me that he had run into you at the Heritage dinner night before last. This reminded me that several months have slipped by since our first get together and prompts me to invite you back for another conversation.

The next time you find you are going to be in Washington, please drop me a note or give me a call and let's see if we can arrange to have lunch again -- my treat.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



Robert M. Gates

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